

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A water soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition, comprising 100 parts by weight of a carboxyl group-containing polymer (A) prepared by copolymerizing an α,β -unsaturated carboxylic acid (a) with a compound (b) having at least two ethylenic unsaturated groups; and 0.01 to 20 parts by weight of at least one compound (B) selected from the group consisting of an ester (c) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid, and an alkylene oxide adduct of an ester (d) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid, wherein said compound (b) having at least two ethylenic unsaturated groups is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of pentaerythritol tetraallyl ether, tetraallyloxyethane and polyallyl saccharose; said polyhydric alcohol used in the ester (c) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid is at least one polyhydric alcohol selected from the group consisting of glycerol, polyglycerol and sorbitol; and said polyhydric alcohol used in the alkylene oxide adduct (d) of an ester obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid is at least one polyhydric alcohol selected from the group consisting of glycerol, polyglycerol and sorbitol.

2. (Currently Amended) The water-soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition according to claim 1, wherein the α,β -unsaturated carboxylic acid (a) is acrylic acid.

3-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The water soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition according to claim 1, wherein the ester (c) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid is an ester obtained from glycerol or polyglycerol, and stearic acid, isostearic acid or oleic acid.

6. (Cancelled).

7. (Currently Amended) The water soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition according to claim 1, wherein the alkylene oxide adduct of an ester (d) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of polyoxyethylene sorbitol fatty acid esters, polyoxyethylene castor oil derivatives, polyoxyethylene hydrogenated castor oil derivatives and polyoxyethylene glycerol fatty acid esters.

8. (New) The water-soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition according to claim 1, wherein carboxyl group-containing

polymer (A) is prepared by copolymerizing in an inert solvent the α,β -unsaturated carboxylic acid (a) with the compound (b) having at least two ethylenic unsaturated groups.

9. (New) The water-soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition according to claim 8, wherein said inert solvent dissolves the α,β -unsaturated carboxylic acid (a) and the compound (b) having at least two ethylenic unsaturated groups, but does not dissolve the resulting carboxyl group-containing polymer composition.

10. (New) The water-soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition according to claim 9, wherein said inert solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of aliphatic hydrocarbons having 2 to 8 carbon atoms, which may be substituted with a halogen, alicyclic hydrocarbons having 5 to 7 carbon atoms, and aromatic hydrocarbons, which may be substituted with a halogen, alkyl acetates, and ketone compounds.

11. (New) The water-soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition according to claim 9, wherein said inert solvent is at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of ethylene dichloride, normal hexane, cyclohexane, normal heptane and ethyl acetate.

12. (New) A water soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition, comprising 100 parts by weight of a carboxyl group-containing polymer (A) prepared by copolymerizing in an inert solvent an α,β -unsaturated carboxylic acid (a) with a compound (b) having at least two ethylenic unsaturated groups; and 0.01 to 20 parts by weight of at least one compound (B) selected from the group consisting of an ester (c) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid, and an alkylene oxide adduct of an ester (d) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid.

13. (New) The water soluble carboxyl group-containing polymer composition according to claim 12, wherein said compound (b) having at least two ethylenic unsaturated groups is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of pentaerythritol tetraallyl ether, tetraallyloxyethane and polyallyl saccharose; said polyhydric alcohol used in the ester (c) obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid is at least one polyhydric alcohol selected from the group consisting of glycerol, polyglycerol and sorbitol; and said polyhydric alcohol used in the alkylene oxide adduct (d) of an ester obtained from a polyhydric alcohol and a fatty acid is at least one polyhydric alcohol selected from the group consisting of glycerol, polyglycerol and sorbitol.